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THE BAPTIST

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## FMB report reflects booming missions

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Eight-foot-tall grass closes around Fred Allen as he turns his four-wheel-drive vehicle off a rocky road in Zambia's Western Province, one tire following a footpath.

It's another day of church developer's work for the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) missionary, who closed out a career in music ministry three years ago in Lusaka to bring truth to the gospel-hungry Lozi people.

In three years, Allen has seen 15 Lozi Baptist churches and 10 fellowships started. Invitations to start new groups keep coming from other villages.

People are responding in such numbers Allen and his wife Joy have to buy baptism certificates by the ream.

They haven't had time yet to complete a survey for the missionaries who will replace them after they retire later this year.

"People thought I was crazy to start a new work three years from my retirement," Allen recalled. "They asked: 'Do you feel you can do the job of a church developer?' I'm not a theologian or a preacher."

The Allens, like FMB missionaries in other areas, found yielding their spirits to God produced better results than relying on technical preparation.

Responsive pockets of people like the Lozi account for continuing growth of the FMB enterprise.

Last year missionaries and local Baptists with whom they worked started 2,367 new churches and baptized 283,674 new Christians.

Total membership, fueled by response on key mission fields, was reported at about 4.1 million. The number of churches increased by 2% to 39,876.

These figures and others, just released by FMB in its annual statistical report for 1996, indicate another healthy year for missionary efforts, though not record-breaking.

The report also indicates a quickly expanding ministry in areas the board considers "harvest fields" and "The Last Frontier" — a world region with little access to the gospel because of political or cultural resistance.

Statistics from The Last Frontier show several first-ever churches among a number of people groups.

In one area of central Asia, after a year and a half of witness and work, seven Buddhist men now meet to study the Bible, forming the nucleus of what will become a church.

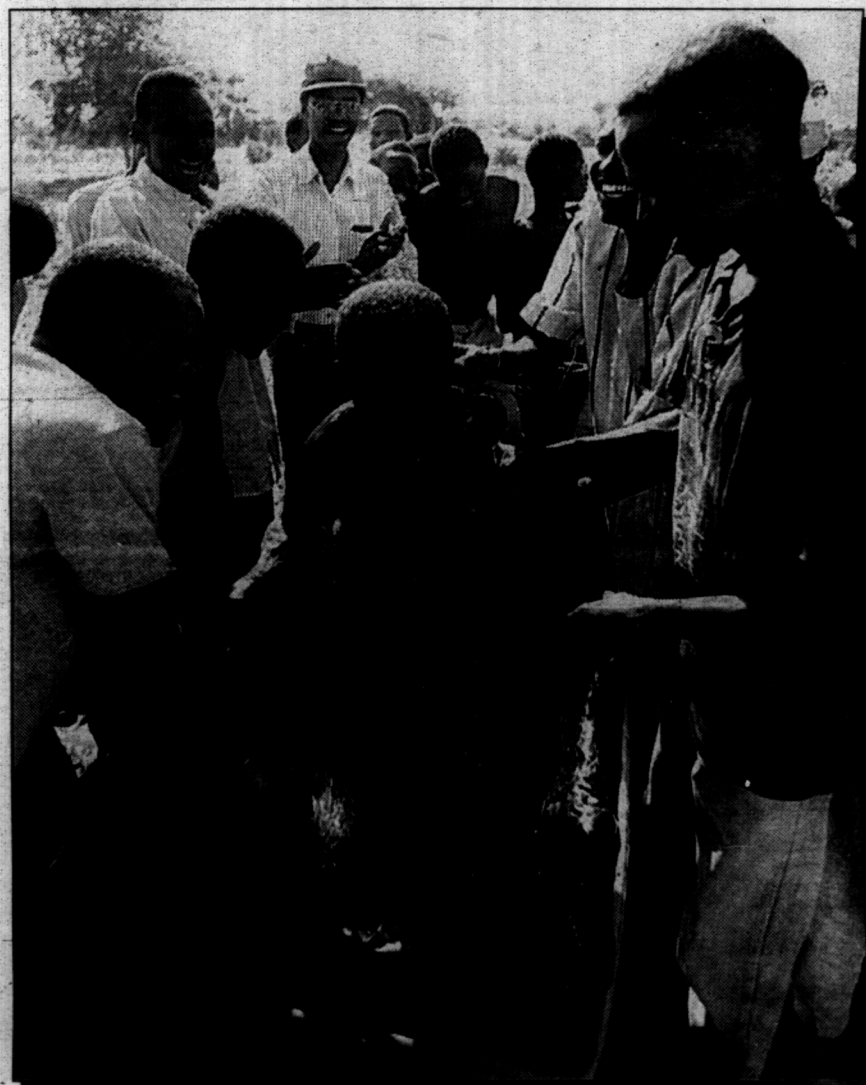
In a city of northern Africa, five churches of Muslim converts

are thriving after the first Southern Baptist couple arrived five years ago.

To sustain future growth on responsive fields, missionaries last year continued strengthening attempts to train new leaders.

Enrollment in discipleship programs grew from 1995 by about 25%, while the number of student centers grew by 24%.

Seminaries and Bible schools grew by about 6%, with a total enrollment of 19,294.



**NEW TO THE KINGDOM**—This boy was one of nine people baptized during a recent service in the village of Banijiti, Niger, in West Africa. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's latest report highlights worldwide openness to the gospel message. (BP photo by Roy M. Burroughs)

### Sharing love of Jesus online

"Can anyone help me?"

The question appeared on Bill Tober's computer monitor as he surfed the Internet Relay Chat (IRC) boards. It was almost 2 a.m., when most ministers would be in bed. After a quick yawn, he typed his response to the 16-year-old girl who had sent the request.

She told Tober her father had just died of a heart attack. She said she didn't have any friends or anyone with whom she could talk.

"She asked, 'Is Daddy going to heaven?' And I said, 'Well, I don't know that answer, but I can get someone who can help you,'" Tober said.

While continuing the on-line chat, Tober raced through his database of churches in her town. Between typing and reading, he phoned the pastor of a Southern Baptist church near her and, before the Internet conversation was finished, that pastor was knocking at the girl's door.

"As it turned out," Tober said, "he did the funeral, and that girl and her mother are now members in his church."

Tober, of Adams, Tenn., a retired Southern Baptist Navy chaplain, is the senior chaplain of the Online Chapel, an Internet-based counseling ministry that does most of its work between 10 p.m. and 3 a.m. (CT).

Tober said the chapel began because he was an Internet hobbyist with much time on his hands after retirement.

Currently, the chapel has six chaplains who regularly monitor the IRC channels. The Online Chapel's home page can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~billtober/chapel.html>

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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### Looking back

#### 10 years ago

Sunshine Church, Pearl, loses its sanctuary to fire on Sunday, March 29. Investigators rule arson as the cause. Church members, undaunted by the blaze, vote a new name for the church — Park Place — and prepare for new growth.

#### 20 years ago

W. Kelly Pyron of Natchez, president of the Baptist Children's Village (BCV) board of trustees, and Paul N. Nunnery, BCV executive director, announce the purchase of Farrow Manor, Inc., of Senatobia. The Village has leased the Tate county property since 1975.

#### 50 years ago

Mississippi Baptist Hospital in Jackson has 35 new rooms on the first and second floors ready for occupancy, part of the five-story addition now under construction. When completed, the hospital will have a total of 300 beds to help alleviate a critical hospital bed shortage in Mississippi.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.  
Perkins Jr.**  
Editor

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# A Christian parent's responsibility

A pair of human events — one national in scope and tragedy, and the other local in appeal — have served once again to mark this age as a troubling time for Christians, and especially for Christian parents.

Both events should remind those of us committed to raising our little ones to be the next generation of courageous Christians, that our task requires constant vigilance and an unconditional commitment to guarding their hearts and minds from the malignancies of this world.

So it has been for Christian parents since the earthly time of Jesus. Our modern culture's inexorable movement toward perversity, coupled with the rapid and virtually uncontrollable spread of communications technology, have exposed today's children to ideas and ways of life that were unconceivable only a generation ago.

Marshall Herff Applewhite, son of a Texas minister, once had an ascending musical career that apparently knew no limit. He seemed perfectly normal.

On March 27, "Do" — as Applewhite renamed himself in honor of the first note on the musical scale — led 38 impressionable followers in San Diego to commit suicide in order to fulfill his twisted vision of a "higher level" of existence aboard a UFO hiding behind the Hale-Bopp Comet.

As the strange story of the Heaven's Gate cult continues to unfold, parents ask themselves, "Those people were someone's

children; how did such a terrible thing happen? How can I keep my children from falling prey to such unholy insanity?"

Don't chalk up such a tragedy to California weirdness. If we drop our guard, the Evil One can make it happen right here in the heart of the Bible Belt.

Marilyn Manson, the Satan-worshipping shock-rock group from Florida, will soon be playing two dates in Mississippi. (See page nine of this issue.)

Aside from utilizing as lyrics virtually every vulgarity ever coined, the group exhibits apparent obsessions with violence and death, and has allegedly ended some of their concerts with an altar call for Satan.

That's not happening in California. That's not happening in Waco. That's happening in Jackson and Biloxi, Mississippi.

What is a parent to do? We can't lock our children in the house. Most of our houses are filled with cable-fed televisions, VCRs, and Internet-connected computers, anyway.

As usual, God's Word holds the key.

In Psalm 119:9-11 (NIV), David asks, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Proverbs 22:5-6 (NIV) follows: "In the paths of the wicked lie thorns and snares, but he who guards his soul stays far from them. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."

"I DON'T HAVE TIME TO  
PLAY NOW, BOY — MY  
DAD IS PREACHING TODAY  
AND IT ENCOURAGES HIM  
TO SEE ME THERE!"



Contrary to the latest trendy proposal on child-rearing, we cannot depend on "the village" to raise our children.

Christian parents simply must be involved in every aspect of their children's spiritual and social upbringing — no matter how tiring and frustrating that may turn out to be.

If we want to save them from the fate of so many of today's confused, "lost souls," we can do no less.

Our Savior is depending on us (Matt. 19:14).

Dec. 11, 1994, is one Sunday I'll never forget.

Just a month earlier, we had moved our family from Isola to Houlika, where my husband Gary was called to pastor First Church.

Around 8:30 a.m. as we were preparing for church, we received a telephone call — the church was on fire.

As Gary raced out the door, I peered out the window to see fire billowing up through the church steeple. The flames towered over the 100-year-old oak trees that lined the street.

The next hour was a blur of telephone calls, firemen, and frantic parishioners. Our three children were dazed by the fire, so close to their new home.

Our nine-year-old son Joel came out of his room toting a bulging backpack.

"Whatcha got, Joel?" I asked. "I've packed all my treasures," he announced. "I've got to get them outside in case the fire spreads to our house."

His eyes looked frightened, and I knew my anxious expression wasn't helping.

"Honey, our house is too far behind the church; it won't burn," I assured him. He reluctantly returned his valuables to his room.

Two hours later, the fellowship hall in our church's family life center was filled with folding chairs. A hundred dazed believers watched out the windows as the fire continued, just across the parking lot.

Gary preached fervently and encouraged the congregation to keep as calm as possible. The worshippers, dressed in housecoats, overalls, and jogging suits, felt anything but calm.

"My granddaddy helped build that church," a young man told me.

"I was baptized there and my husband's funeral was held in that very sanctuary," an older woman sobbed.

## GUEST OPINION:

### God's Holy Fire

By Deborah Blair  
First Church, Houlika



The entire congregation seemed to be grieving as if a person had died.

I wondered, "Lord, is this why you sent us here? How can you make good come from this tragedy?"

When the smoke cleared, our sanctuary and two-story education building were gone. As we retreated to bed that night, every bone in my body ached.

Little did I know our work had just begun.

Concerned callers flooded the telephone for days. Area ministers brought men from

their churches to convert our half-court gym into a worship center.

The Mississippi Baptist Convention sent a double-wide trailer to use as education space.

The county sheriff each day sent a work crew of prisoners to help clear the debris. The ladies of our church daily cooked hot lunches for the workers.

Churches of every race and denomination collected donations. The whole community

united to help us.

One evening Gary announced, "A prisoner was saved today. David, the red-headed guy, prayed to accept Jesus as his Savior."

We were all thrilled. On the next Sunday, David received special permission to come to our gym for the church service.

When the invitation was given at the close of the service, David came forward and told everyone of the commitment to Christ he made earlier that week.

"If we'd never had the fire," I thought, "David might never have been saved."

As Gary introduced him to the congregation, David's auburn hair sparkled under the bright fluorescent lights of the gym. I was reminded of the red flames I'd seen above the now-missing steeple.

I smiled as I recalled Joel on the day of the fire, his treasures all in a backpack ready to escape the flames.

Now a real treasure — a young man's soul — had escaped eternal flames.

A total of 75 precious people came to know Jesus in the year after the fire in our little town of 800.

An electrical problem was said to have sparked the flames on that December Sunday, but only God can be credited with setting his church "on fire" spiritually.

Our congregation had no pews or pulpit, but eternal treasures had been gained that no fire could ever destroy.



# WCC president resigning to accept La. post

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

The president of Baptist-affiliated William Carey College (WCC) in Hattiesburg

announced March 25 that he is leaving the school to become president of Louisiana College, a Baptist-affiliated school in Pineville, La. Rory Lee, 47, WCC president

and chief operating officer since February 1996, will assume the titles of president and chief executive officer at Louisiana College on June 2.

Prior to accepting the WCC presidency, Lee served in various roles for nearly 25 years at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton.

"After 26 wonderful years of working in Christian higher education in Mississippi, going to Louisiana College is a wonderful opportunity. The love I have for MC and WCC will always be a part of me.

"Louisiana College, like the three Mississippi Baptist colleges, offers quality academic programs in a distinctively Christian setting. I have been pleasantly surprised at the number of Mississippians who have ties to Louisiana College," Lee said.

Jim Edwards, WCC chancellor and chief executive officer, congratulated Lee on his promotion to the top spot at Louisiana College.

"The administration, faculty and staff, students, and trustees are very grateful for the many contributions Rory Lee has made... at WCC.

"All of us... have been extremely pleased with his caring attitude, personal attention, nurturing style, and Christian demeanor.

"He will be missed by those of us at WCC and by his many friends and associates in Mississippi Baptist life.

"Our prayers and good wishes go with him and his family as they take this next step on their faith journey and commitment to excellence in Christian higher education," Edwards said.

No replacement for Lee has yet been selected.



THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

## New WMU officers elected



Marjean Patterson (left), executive director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), congratulates Kay Hodge (second from left) of Hernando, new state WMU secretary; and new state WMU president Rebecca Williams (second from right) of Gautier. Dellanna O'Brien (right) of Birmingham, national WMU executive director, was also on hand for the March 17-18 annual meeting of the state WMU at First Church, Clinton.

# Clarke property sale clears last hurdle

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Gov. Kirk Fordice on March 27 signed legislation authorizing the Mississippi Department of Mental Health (DMH) to

purchase the property of Clarke College in Newton, closed in 1992 after a long run as the only Baptist-affiliated junior college in the state.

The \$1,000,000 purchase is expected to be completed in July, when the state traditionally sells the bonds that fund such purchases. DMH plans to renovate the campus and use it as a residential facility for adults under the department's care.

Larry Otis of Tupelo, chairman of the special committee assigned by Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) messengers with the task of disposing of the Clarke property, thanked state and local officials and the special committee's members for the cooperative spirit that brought the sale to completion.

"The instructions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention have been carried out, and the property will be used in a manner compatible with the instructions given to the committee," Otis said.

Otis also singled out Clarke alumni for special appreciation.

"The gracious cooperation of the active Clarke College alumni in this most difficult process has brought out the strong Christian character of the Clarke spirit," he said.

MBC messengers stipulated that a house and one acre of land be reserved from the sale for a permanent Alumni House site.

That has been accomplished, Otis said, and officers of the alumni association are presently working with DMH officials to design a suitable memorial on the site.

Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, commended Larry Otis and the members of the special committee, and added, "The final chapter in Clarke College history has not been written; the legacy of Christian service that is Clarke will continue to burn brightly in all its graduates who are helping to bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus."

DMH executive director Randy Hendrix said, "DMH is very pleased that Gov. Fordice has signed House Bill 912, which authorizes the purchase of the Clarke College property for development into a specialized facility for older persons with mental illness.

"This project is the result of the close, cooperative working relationship between legislators, Gov. Fordice, the Mississippi Baptist Convention, the citizens of Newton County, and DMH — all working for the common good of persons with special needs."

Newton Mayor Hamp Beatty described the economic impact of the anticipated renovations and long-term staffing of the DMH facility to the city and surrounding Newton County as "tremendous."

"We are very pleased that the Governor signed the bill. The facility will produce many jobs for this area, including a number of professionals who will be working at the facility.

"The Mississippi Baptist Convention and the special committee were very sensitive to our concerns about how the Clarke property would be used, and we are pleased that they worked hard to find an appropriate entity to purchase the property."



SIGNING CEREMONY — Gov. Kirk Fordice (seated) signs legislation March 27 authorizing the state's purchase of Clarke College property in Newton. Looking on are (from left) legislators Johnny Stringer, Raymond Comans; DMH executive director Randy Hendrix; and legislators Bobby Moody and Charlie Williams. (BR special photo by Langston Moore)

## Clarke College

- 1907 Organized by General Association of Regular Baptists in Miss. on 40 acres donated by Newton residents. Named after Nathan Lytle Clarke (1812-1906), longtime Miss. pastor, church organizer, and Baptist newspaper editor.
- 1908 First session opens with six teachers and 104 students.
- 1911 First degrees conferred on nine graduates.
- 1914 Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) accepts ownership and assumes operation.
- 1930 MBC discontinues support; college leased and operated as private institution.
- 1945 MBC reassumes responsibility for college operations.
- 1950 Clarke records highest enrollment with 565 students.
- 1980 Clarke trustees report \$175,000 deficit and request merger with Mississippi College (MC), which is approved by MBC messengers.
- 1990 Citing continued loss of students, dwindling financial resources, and removal of accreditation, MC trustees close Clarke and offer transfers to remaining 100 students.
- 1992 Proposal to reopen college fails on vote of MBC messengers, who instead approve special committee to dispose of Clarke property.
- 1997 Clarke property purchased for \$1,000,000 by Miss. Department of Mental Health.

Sources: *Broadman Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*  
MBCB Office of Communications  
"The Baptist Record" archives



# New MBHS president discusses future

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

First of a two-part series

The new chief of Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (MBHS), has seen the future of healthcare in America, and he believes the wide-ranging medical organization he now heads is perfectly poised to step into that future.

Kurt W. Metzner, the 55-year old Minneapolis, Minn. native who assumed the duties of MBHS president and chief executive officer on Feb. 17, characterized the Baptist-affiliated health-care system as a "superb organization."

Jackson-based MBHS was formed in September 1996 by Mississippi

Baptist Medical Center trustees to serve as the parent company for the medical center and the many other healthcare services affiliated with the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

"MBHS has a great foundation. It is broad-based and responsive to medical, spiritual, and educational needs. Clearly, the system is a leader in healthcare in Mississippi," he said.

Metzner should know. He has spent the last 32 years of his life in the constantly-evolving field of healthcare management.

He came to MBHS from Horizon Healthcare of Milwaukee, Wis., a healthcare network system he founded in 1990. Under his leadership as president and chief executive officer, Horizon in six years nearly tripled in the number of network member hospitals and affiliated organizations.

His career has also included

stints in hospital consulting and as president and chief executive officer of the acute care group of Baptist Hospitals of Phoenix, Ariz.

Metzner and his wife Dianne, a preschool teacher, have two adult children. Their eldest son works for an insurance company in Kansas City, and their younger son is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota.

Reflecting his German roots — his grandfather emigrated to America from Germany in the early years of this century — Metzner is a Lutheran by denomination.

The couple hasn't yet joined a metro-area church, but Metzner said they have visited a number of local Lutheran, Southern Baptist, and Methodist churches.

Metzner isn't shy about sharing his views on faith and spirituality.

"A religiously-related organi-

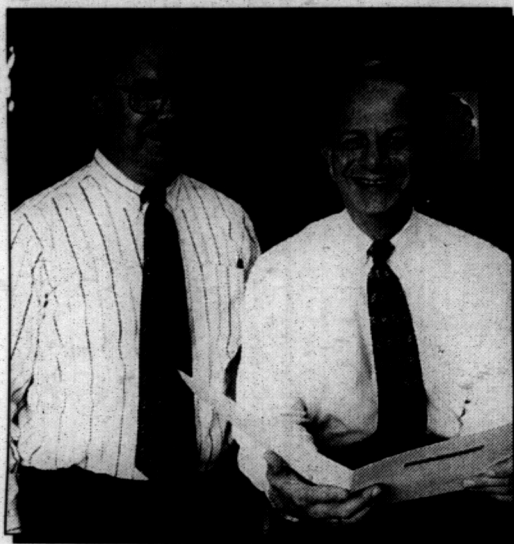
zation like MBHS has a responsibility to express its mission in a way other organizations can't. That's very important.

"We should be comfortable praying and expressing our faith here. It's right. It's appropriate," Metzner said.

"I want MBHS to provide leadership that expresses our faith-based mission, which doesn't need to be compromised. I want to see MBHS put that mission into action and not just talk about it philosophically.

"Extending the ministry of MBHS should be done in concert with the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Baptist congregations of the state. That will give us the ability to be fully responsive to the community we serve," he said.

Next week: The nuts and bolts of managing one of the most expansive healthcare systems in the Southeast.



REVIEWING PLANS — Kurt W. Metzner (right), new chief of Mississippi Baptist Health Systems, Inc., (MBHS) discusses the future of the Jackson-based health care system with John Voss, MBHS legal counsel and bivocational pastor of Calvary Church, Lamar Association. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

## Video magazine set for April cable broadcast

"Vessels," a video magazine produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), will be shown on a number of American Christian Television System (ACTS)/

Odyssey channels and other cable television systems around the state beginning in April.

"Vessels" is hosted by Roland and Lisa Leavell, members of First Church, Jackson.

The video segments are:

◆ "World Changers." The story of a group of high school students who paid their own way to renovate substandard homes in Miss.

◆ "Health Care." A ministry of Miss. nurses who give of their special talents to help people in need and share the love of Jesus.

◆ "Youth Night." Annual event draws 19,000 teens from all over the state to Miss. Coliseum in Jackson for a Christian rally.

◆ "Disaster Relief." Miss. volunteers who traveled to Haiti to distribute food around the poverty-stricken island nation.

◆ "Chain of Love." The healing of a Honduran boy's badly-damaged body through an international ministry that drew together helping hands across borders.

Miss. churches that have access to a cable channel and would like to broadcast "Vessels" can acquire a copy on loan in 3/4-inch, S-VHS or other formats from the MBCB Broadcast Services Department.

For more information, contact MBCB Broadcast Services Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

CITY	DATE	TIME	CABLE CHANNEL
Brandon	April 9	9 p.m.	Rankin Co. Cable Ch.35
Bruce	April 6 April 9	1 p.m. 7:30 p.m.	Walco/Bruce Ch. 2
Calhoun City	April 10	7 p.m.	Galaxy Cablevision Ch. 27
Cleveland	April 8	7 p.m.	Warner Cable Ch. 10
Grenada	April 6 April 9 April 10	6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 8 p.m.	LPTV Ch. 13
Greenville	April 7 April 9 April 11	7 p.m. 11:00 a.m. 7 p.m.	PCA Ch. 17
Hattiesburg	April 7 April 9	7 p.m. 8:30 p.m.	Pine Belt Ch. 6
Monticello	April 6	6:30 p.m.	Galaxy Cablevision Ch. 23
Newton	April 6 April 8	7 p.m. 8 p.m.	CableVision Ch. 10

## Evangelists' Profile

This space is dedicated to Mississippi men and women who have committed themselves to vocational evangelism. Churches are encouraged to take advantage of their talents in helping to reap the harvest.

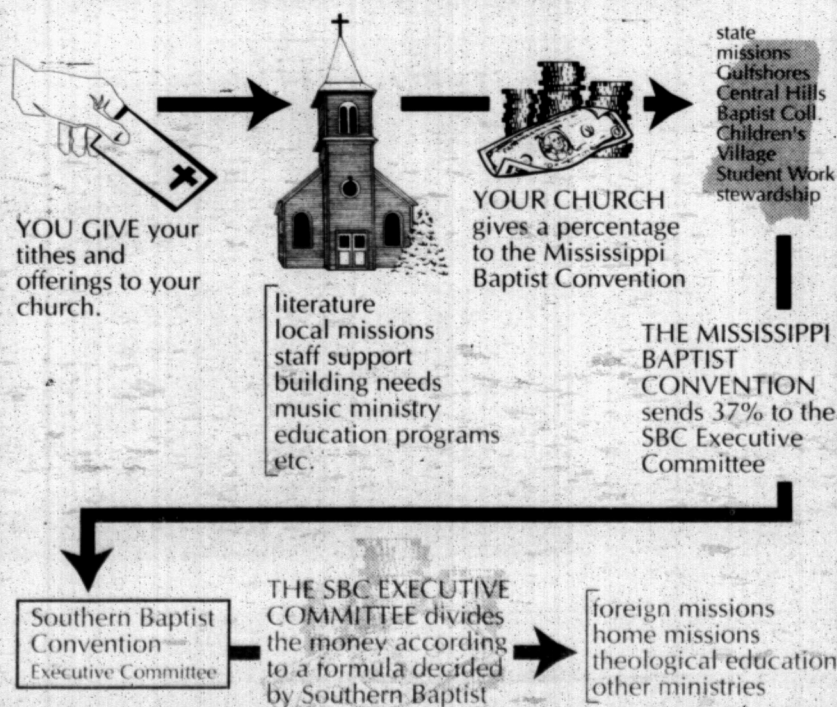
### This week's evangelist

Joe Styron  
Kilmichael

**Years in ministry:** 20  
**Education:** Clarke College, William Carey College  
**Focal ministry:** Music evangelist — revivals, concerts, crusades  
**Personal:** Married; two children  
**Address/telephone:**  
Joe Styron  
462 Vaiden-Kilmichael Rd.  
Kilmichael, MS 39747  
(601) 262-7360



## THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM





# MC's Gore receives governor's art award

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Samuel Gore, longtime professor of art at Mississippi College (MC), was presented the Governor's Award for Career in the Arts at ceremonies held Feb. 28 in the House Chamber of the Old Capital Museum.

The award was presented by Mississippi's First Lady, Pat Fordice.

The Governor's Awards for Excellence in the Arts was established in 1988 to recognize significant contributions to artistic life in the state of Mississippi.

The awards are coordinated each year by the Mississippi Arts Council, which was established in 1968 as the official grantsmaking and service agency to the arts. It is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Miss. Legislature, and private sources.

According to the award's program, Gore was recognized for 42 years of full-time teaching of art at MC, and for "passing on his love of art" to his students.

During his tenure, Gore served as head of the art department and achieved the rank of professor. He elevated the art program at MC from elective courses to a degree program with four full-time teachers.

Gore was also responsible for the foundry at MC, which enables bronze casting for sculpture classes.

In his acceptance speech, Gore said, "My career must be described as one of gratitude and indebtedness to precious people who have come into my life and who have given me encouragement and motivation."

Gore has used his art as an expression of his Christian faith, conducting more than 500 sculptural programs in 16 states and foreign countries for churches, schools, civic clubs, and the U.S. armed forces.



CAREER RECOGNITION — Mississippi College Art professor Sam Gore (left) is introduced by former student William Dunlap (center), formerly of Webster County and now of McLean, Va., as First Lady Pat Fordice prepares to present Gore with the Governor's Award for Career in the Arts during Feb. 28 ceremonies in Jackson. (BR special photo)

"I determined to be a practitioner of everything I taught. In the process, I developed a performing art of the sculpturing process expressing my faith and values," he said.

Gore's sculptures and paintings are housed in several prominent locations in Mississippi. Among the most prominent are three bronze sculptures:

◆ "Student Nurse" (1989) in the lobby of the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

◆ "Head of Christ" (1990) in the lobby

of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board building in Jackson;

◆ "The Working Man" (1992), which depicts a laborer reading from the Bible, at the Jim Buck Ross Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum in Jackson.

He has also completed numerous sculptures and murals for private collections.

Inquiries about Gore's presentation may be directed to Alice Smith or Pat Turner at MC by calling (601) 925-3246 or FAX (601) 925-3804.

## Teachers needed in China

Jean Allgood of Gulfport reports that 20 volunteer teachers are needed at Guangxi University in Nanning, China from July 7 to Aug. 10, 1997. Volunteers must be prepared to pay their own expenses. However, food and lodging is provided while in China. For more information contact Allgood at (601) 896-1275.

"This will be an experience one cannot forget for a lifetime," Allgood said. Allgood is an experienced volunteer missions worker, and this is the fourth year she has been asked to recruit teachers for Guangxi University. She is a member of First Church, Gulfport.

## Tax seminar scams becoming more brazen

By Richard Hammar  
Attorney/CPA

Over the past several years, a small number of unscrupulous persons have engaged in shameful fear tactics to frighten pastors and other church leaders into attending worthless seminars on church and clergy tax issues.

Advertising is filled with misrepresentations and gross exaggerations with one goal in mind — to frighten and intimidate you into attending a tax seminar and buying worthless products and services.

Some individuals use fear tactics to compensate for their total lack of professional qualifications.

After all, anyone can appear knowledgeable and authoritative by frightening seminar audiences with phony Internal Revenue Service (IRS) forms, false reporting requirements, and wild claims about IRS audits of churches and ministers.

Few people are knowledgeable enough to question such tactics.

Tragically, many have been duped into attending such seminars, and have purchased worthless "accounting" and "compliance" services.

One widely-promoted and self-proclaimed "expert" has been sued for fraud, investigated by the IRS, and has repeatedly lied to audiences of pastors about

his professional qualifications.

If you have any doubts about a seminar leader's qualifications, raise your hand during the seminar and ask the presenter to summarize his or her professional qualifications.

If the person claims to be an attorney or certified public accountant (CPA), ask in what state he or she is licensed. You can call the bar association or board of accountancy in that state and confirm that the person is a licensed attorney or CPA.

The good news is that neither churches nor ministers are being "targeted" by the IRS. The IRS is not putting church treasurers or pastors in jail.

Anything you read to the contrary is false and has one purpose — to scare you.

You do not have to become a victim of such a scam. Fortunately, more and more church leaders are becoming aware of these scams, but as audiences dwindle the scam artists use even more outrageous advertising to attract new victims.

One organization attempts to frighten church leaders with the prospect of an IRS audit.

Statistics are cited concerning thousands of churches that are audited each year and thousands of new IRS agents hired to audit churches and ministers.

Such statements are completely false and designed solely to

intimidate persons into attending a seminar. Here are the facts:

◆ Only a few bona fide churches are audited each year.

◆ The number of IRS agents that audit exempt organizations declined between 1990-95.

◆ Funding for IRS oversight of tax-exempt organizations is declining.

◆ Only 60 out of 1.5 million tax-exempt organizations have had their exempt status revoked by the IRS, and only a few of these were churches.

◆ Churches have significant protections in the event of an IRS audit as a result of the

Church Audit Procedures Act enacted by Congress in 1985.

If you leave a seminar in a state of confusion or fear, this is a good indication to stay away from the organization's services or products.

Hammar is editor of the "Church Law and Tax Report" and "Church Treasurer Alert!" newsletters in Springfield, Mo.

For more information on this subject, contact the Business Office of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

### Tax Seminar Pledge

I understand that the IRS is not targeting churches or ministers for audits or criminal prosecutions. I also am aware that there are unscrupulous and unqualified individuals who are attempting to frighten church leaders into attending tax seminars with intimidating and misleading advertisements. I will not become a victim of these scams and I pledge that I:

◆ will not waste my church's resources attending a tax seminar as a result of advertising designed to frighten or intimidate me.

◆ will not attend a seminar without confirming the professional qualifications of the presenter.

◆ will not waste our church's resources paying for an "audit" by a seminar leader who is not an attorney or CPA.

◆ will not purchase any resources at a tax seminar as a result of scare tactics.

◆ will not attend a tax seminar if the identity and professional qualifications of the presenter are not disclosed in seminar advertising.

Source: Church Treasurer Alert!, April 1997



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resurrection of his Son.

### 3. His promise to walk with us through life gives us peace.

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courage; I have overcome the  
world." (John 16:33)  
Jesus extends his promise of  
peace to us, but we must  
respond by accepting him as  
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ment today by, (1) admitting  
you need God, (2) confessing  
your sins to him, and (3) by  
faith, receiving Christ as Lord.

If you make a decision for Christ  
today, contact a local  
Mississippi Baptist Church  
for spiritual guidance.

# Albania looting claims 'Jesus' equipment

TIRANA, Albania (BP) — A key evangelistic thrust in Albania has suffered a setback as chaos and anarchy continues to engulf the country.

Equipment and materials used in the yearly Albania Evangelical Rural Outreach (AERO) effort in Albanian villages for showing the "Jesus" film have been looted from a storage facility in Tirana, the nation's capital, according to a March 21 report by European Baptist Press Service (EBPS).

Stolen were 16 sets of projectors, screens, and generators for showing the film; 300 beds; kitchen equipment; and other items used to establish base camps in Albanian villages for teams of volunteers who have worked in the project each summer since 1994.

Plans were under way for 300 volunteers to come in a few months for this year's effort, but they are on hold until the stability in Albania can be determined, according to Mississippian Larry Cox, Foreign Mission Board (FMB) field administrator in charge of Albanian work.

More than 830 villages in the rugged countryside have been the focus of AERO, a cooperative venture involving FMB, Campus Crusade for Christ, Helimission and Albanian believers.

Hundreds of AERO workers have shown Campus Crusade's "Jesus" film to more than 67,000 Albanians since 1994, resulting in hundreds of Albanians committing their lives to Christ and churches organizing rapidly.

Albania's turmoil has prompted all 18 personnel affiliated with the FMB, along with all British Missionary Society, Canadian Baptist Mission and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) workers, to leave the country, EBPS reported.

Vignettes of violence, and at the same time the quiet calm of

Christ's presence, are told by those who lived through the past days in Albania.

Albanian Baptists in Tirana were planning to resume at least one Bible study and worship on Sunday, March 24, after going through terrible days of turmoil, according to Anila Hysa, office secretary in the Baptist Centre office in Tirana.

Young believers helped missionaries — the only pastors and Christian mentors they have known — gather what they

could and get out of the country. Albanian Christians encouraged foreign colleagues to leave when they were ready; there was no spirit of blame or disappointment, according to one missionary. "They told us, 'Do what you have to do,'" she said.

The last few weeks have given Albania's young believers a test of their faith in bad times — checking in with each other on the phone or at the centre; or a few gathering in a home to pray, EBPS reported.

"We have prayed a lot and that gives us hope," Hysa said. "When I pray, I know Jesus listens. I'm so happy I came to know him."

In another report, CBF missionary Debbie Ayers and her family were getting ready to stuff a few belongings into a small carry-on bag for the boat trip from Albania's port, Durres, to Italy March 14.

She was struck in the head by an errant gunshot, but has recovered and left the country.

## Staying Well Informed

### April is Alcohol Awareness Month

At just 16, John felt his life was pretty much over. Already he had experienced many of life's trials, letdowns and disappointments. What began as a beer every now and then with friends soon turned into frequent trips to buy more alcohol. What he didn't know was that he was on a fast track to becoming an alcoholic.

All the warning signs were there — sliding grades, lost interest in old friends and activities, evasive behavior — signs obvious to many an outside observer. Yet families are often the last to know when a young person has developed an addiction. Before long, John was stealing liquor from his parents and hiding it under his bed. His downward spiral quickly landed him in the hospital after an alcohol-related auto accident.

John's ensuing arrest and DWI conviction led to his participation in a substance abuse program at the Chemical Dependency Center (CDC) at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center. CDC counselors helped John understand his addiction and come to grips with the new realities of his life. Recovery was slow and often frustrating, but John found himself with new hope and surrounded by a network of people who took a personal stake in his struggle to become free of addiction.

John's experience is shared by thousands of people every year. Alcohol abuse affects young and old, rich and poor, black and white. Its effects can be devastating on individuals, families, businesses and organizations. But no matter how hopeless the situation may seem, help is available. At Baptist's CDC, counselors can help give you back control of your life. Working in Mississippi's oldest hospital-based chemical dependency program, CDC counselors have helped people break the vicious cycle of alcohol and drug abuse since 1976. Now is the time to seek help.

### Understanding the Benefits of Alcohol Abuse Counseling

Call 948-MBMC or 1-800-948-MBMC (6262)  
for more information.



MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST MEDICAL CENTER

## CBF of Mississippi Spring General Assembly

Speaker: Dr. Daniel Vestal  
National CBF Coordinator

University Baptist Church  
3200 West Arlington Loop  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Friday, April 4, 1997

Informal Coffee  
Fellowship and Worship  
7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 5, 1997

General Assembly  
9:30 a.m. — 2:15 p.m.

**CBF Mission Statement:** We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and Churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to network, empower, and mobilize Baptist Christians and Churches for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ.



## PRAYER SUPPORT NEEDED

Editor:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ from Tirana, Albania! I want to express our sincere gratitude to all Mississippi Baptists for their prayers for us during this time in Albania. Your prayers are being answered. As you recall, my wife Martha and I were appointed as missionaries with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in July 1995, and have been serving the Lord Jesus in this country since that time. God is truly working among these wonderful people.

I want to ask you to continue praying for this country and these people. While important world leaders are seeking peace in this land between warring factions, we are seeking to bring true and lasting peace to Albanians by introducing them to Jesus. We would be glad to share specific names of persons with whom we are working and witnessing with those individuals who would agree to

pray. Our mailing address is c/o AEP-Box 44, Poste Kutia 19, Tirana, Albania.

This country is suffering tremendously now. We are safe for the time being in the capital city. Please pray for God's continued blessings here and that he would continue opening hearts to the gospel.

Rick and Martha Shaw  
Tirana, Albania

*Editor's note: All CBF and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board personnel were evacuated from Albania after this letter was written. See article on page six.*

## LET'S WORSHIP TOGETHER

Editor:

I'm writing in response to a letter in the March 6 issue of "The Baptist Record," written by Joe Jennings upon his reading the "Guest Opinion" of Paul G. Jones II, regarding race relations.

Jennings brought up the issue of the Tower of Babel as being a reason for different races not coming together "as one body."

You have to look at the motives of those who built the tower of Babel; it was built out of pure selfishness and pride, thus resulting in the eventual fall of those who built it.

The motives of Jones in advocating that the races come together as one body is neither selfish nor proud; his motives are purely from the perspective that we should love our neighbors (others) as ourselves, as Jesus commanded (Matt. 22:30).

Also, the argument about birds not interbreeding is not valid. Jones is not promoting or encouraging marrying or "interbreeding" between people of different races. He only believes that we can worship together as the body of Christ, as we will for eternity in heaven (by the way, heaven will not be segregated!)

I don't advocate marrying between the races and I would never condone my children marrying interracially. I would do everything in my power to stop that from happening, but that has as much to do with worshipping with other races as apples and oranges!

The ground at the foot of the cross is level. In Jesus, denomination; race; and cultures are not important. We are one in the body of Christ.

Racial harmony must rise up within us, otherwise it won't happen on its own. Racism is a spiritual problem and we as Christians have the answer. Racial reconciliation can be achieved if God's children have compassionate hearts that are willing to work in the ministry of reconciliation, it is a high calling.

Cindy Trussell  
Grenada

## FOXWORTH GATHERING

Editor:

First Church, Foxworth, is planning a homecoming on June 22.

We would like to hear from former members and staff. The church office phone number is (601) 736-4401 and the mailing address is P. O. Box 45, Foxworth, MS 39483.

Samantha Armstrong  
Foxworth



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.*

*Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.*

*Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (While church membership is not required, Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)*

*Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.*

*Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks.*

*No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.*

*When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.*



## Start Something New

Thank you for your gifts to the 1997 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Because of your sacrificial giving, home missionaries are starting something new in communities all across America.

Although Easter has passed, some churches have not yet taken a home missions offering. If you have not given, please consider making a generous gift toward the 1997 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal of \$50 million.

Remember, it's never too late to start something new.



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Armstrong  
Easter  
Offering

## Vestal to keynote CBF-Mississippi assembly

Daniel Vestal, new coordinator for the National Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF), will be the keynote speaker April 5 at the CBF of Miss. general assembly at University Church, Hattiesburg.

Registration for the meeting begins at 9:30 a.m., followed by a period of worship at 10 a.m. and a business session at 10:30 a.m.

Vestal will speak and respond to questions from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. A \$6 per person catered lunch will follow (advance reservations helpful).

Breakout sessions will begin at 1 p.m. with a choice of two sessions:

- ◆ Volunteer missions.
- ◆ Worship styles in CBF churches.

At 2 p.m., participants will reassemble for a closing challenge from Dick Allison, CBF of Miss. moderator and pastor of the host church.

Child care for preschoolers will be provided, along with a day camp for children in grades one through six.

University Church will also host an informal coffee fellowship and worship program at 7:30 p.m. on April 4. Vestal will lead the worship.

For more information, contact CBF of Miss. at (601) 355-7824.

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## JUST FOR THE RECORD

**Enterprise Church,** will celebrate its Sesquicentennial birthday on April 13. The guest speaker will be Bill Causey, executive director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. Services will begin at 10 a.m. Lunch will be provided by the church. Taylor Wallace is interim pastor.

**An Experiencing God for Youth Leadership Training Conference** will be held at New Orleans Seminary, April 25-26 and April 28. Experiencing God is designed to help Christians discover how to know and obey

God's will for their lives. The registration fee is \$45 and \$55 after April 11, and includes all resource materials. For more information or to register, write the Office of Continuing Education, New Orleans Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126, or call (504) 282-4455, ext. 3260.

**The First Annual Homeschool Family Vacation and Conference** will be held Aug. 17-20 at Glorieta Conference Center, Glorieta, New Mexico. This year's theme is Reaching New Heights.

There will be challenging general sessions, workshops of every imaginable homeschool topic, food, exhibitors, family worship times, outdoor education, talent night, and plenty of recreational activities. Plus, there will be separate kids sessions. To register or to request a brochure call (800) 797-4222.

**The Media Center of Immanuel Church, Cleveland,** recently held Open House and celebrated its 30th anniversary. The center opened October 1966, under the direction of Patricia Robinson Warren. She has been director for all 30 years. The center consist of approximately 3,000 books and 150 videos.

**Calvary Church, Columbus,** will observe its 60th anniversary on April 6. Sunday School will begin at 9:15 a.m.; worship at 10:30 a.m.; and lunch will be served. Marvin Palmer, pastor from 1952-1956; will bring the message. Roy D. Hawkins is pastor.

**"Keep Beautiful/People Against Litter"** request that churches designate one Sunday in April as Keep America Beautiful Sunday, with an emphasis on Christian responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation. For more information, contact Barbara Dorr at (800) 545-3764.

## NAMES IN THE NEWS



**Linda Willard** recently celebrated her 21st year as secretary of West Heights Church, Pontotoc Association. A reception was held in her honor on Feb. 16. Willard was presented a gold watch, monetary gift, plaque, and a book of memories. Dan Robertson is pastor.



**Fletcher Moorman** was licensed to the ministry by Gore Springs Church, Gore Springs, on Feb. 23. Pictured (from left) are Moorman and Dwayne Kelly, pastor.



**Christopher (Chris) Twilley** was ordained to the ministry by Temple Church, Myrtle, on March 9. Pictured (from left) are Twilley and Griffith Walker, pastor.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**Two Mississippi College School of Law teams** recently took first and second place in the Conrad B. Duberstein National Bankruptcy Moot Court Competition in New York City. The winning team was Niles Hooper and Kaara Liskow, both third year students. The other finalist team of Jeffrey Blackwood and Donna Foster, also third year students, took second place in the com-

petition. Blackwood was also chosen as Outstanding Oralist.

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# Satanic rockers draw ire of Miss. Baptists

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

A Satanic rock group known for blasphemous, violent, and sexually-suggestive music has scheduled two performances in Mississippi, and that has many Christians calling for strong opposition to the group's appearances in the state.

The head of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Christian Action Commission (CAC) believes that's a good idea, but cautions against stepping outside the Christian lifestyle to do so.

Marilyn Manson, which derives its name from dead actress Marilyn Monroe and mass-murderer Charles Manson, is slated to perform April

11 at Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson and April 12 at Gulf Coast Coliseum in Biloxi.

Critics say the Florida-based group substitutes raw lyrics, references to Satan worship, and sexually-suggestive behavior to cover up a lack of musical talent.

CAC executive director Paul G. Jones II said he couldn't be more disgusted with what he knows about the group, or more disappointed that two state-owned facilities contracted to allow the performances.

Bobby Perry, director of missions for Gulf Coast Association in Gulfport, said a multi-denominational group representing several Southern Baptist and other coastal churches met recently with Gulf

Coast Coliseum officials, but their appeal to cancel the Manson concert was rejected on constitutional free-speech grounds and the fact that a contract had already been signed.

Jones said Christians are right to be upset about Manson's vulgar lyrics and invitations to worship Satan.

"However, we must be sure we express outrage in ways that reflect our Christian witness. We must continually ask ourselves, 'How can I confront something like this in a manner that will glorify Jesus?'" he pointed out.

Jones strongly discouraged direct confrontations with people who may already be prone to violence because they are fans of such a group.

He recommended several positive measures that can instead be taken:

## ◆ Don't buy tickets.

"While this may seem to be a 'no-brainer,' the Mississippi appearances will fail if not enough tickets are sold," Jones stressed.

Perry reported that less than 2,000 tickets have thus far been sold for the concert in the cavernous Gulf Coast Coliseum.

Estimates of tickets sales for the Jackson concert published in the local media are somewhat less than the Gulf Coast sales.

Both Perry and Jones pointed out that extreme public reactions by opponents of the concerts may actually increase ticket sales to curiosity-seekers.

## ◆ Be credible in criticism.

"We contacted many of the sites where the group performed, and we have not been able to document any of the sexual antics. The recurring criticism has been of obscene lyrics and disgusting language.

"While that does not mean perverse things haven't been done, we should not risk losing our integrity by repeating that of which we are not sure," Jones stressed.

Jones and Perry said they have been unable to attain independent verification of an

alleged affidavit from a teenager who claimed to have attended a Manson concert in Oklahoma City where the group's lead singer is said to have encouraged audience members to indulge in illegal and immoral activities during the concert.

Similar unverified materials are circulating on the Internet, Jones said.

## ◆ Don't demonstrate or picket on performance night.

"If protests turn into civil disruption — a riot — where people are hurt and property damaged, protesters could be accused of conspiracy and inciting a riot. That would play into the hands of our critics," Jones explained.

## ◆ Provide alternative activities on performance night.

Among other events of which Jones is aware on the night of the Jackson appearance: Sandi Patti will be in concert at Thalia Mara Hall, and First Church, Jackson is planning a youth event at its family life center.

For information on the Sandi Patti concert, call (601) 857-2765 or toll-free (888) 504-7223.

For information on the First Church, Jackson youth event, contact Brett Mayfield at (601) 949-1900.

## ◆ Encourage responsible Christian action.

Jones said a community-wide prayer vigil, not directly connected to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, will be held in Mississippi Coliseum beginning at 7 p.m. on April 10.

In addition, Jones said concerned Christians should continue to contact the two coliseums' managers and members of the state commissions who regulate the facilities.

"Now is the time to 'tighten up' restrictions, as much as legally possible for a public facility, before another group applies for a contract," he said.

For more information, contact CAC at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

## REVIVAL DATES

**Pelahatchie, Pelahatchie:** April 6-11; 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. daily; Sonny Adkins, director, Evangelism Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, evangelist; Danny Brock, Flowood, music; Mike Glenn, pastor.

**Tylertown (Walthall):** April 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; P. J. Scott, Olive Branch, evangelist; Bill Herman, Petal, music; David Sellers, pastor.

**First, Mendenhall:** April 6-9; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 6:55 a.m. and 7 p.m.; W. A. Smith, Madison, evangelist; R. L. and Beth Sigrest, Yazoo City, music; Kermit D. McGregor, pastor.

**First, Lake:** April 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed. 7 p.m.; Bob Rogers, Poplarville, evangelist; John Alumbaugh, Forest, music; LaVerne Summerlin, pastor.

**Mount Vernon (Holmes):** April 10-13; services, 7 each evening; Gene Richardson, evangelist; The Howards, music; H. C. Adams, pastor.

**Christ, Greenwood:** April 13-16; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Larry Edwards, Tchula, evangelist; Wilton Neal, Carrollton, music; Kenny Carver, pastor.

## HOMEcomings

**Camel, Meridian:** 50th anniversary; April 6; activities of the day include Bible study at 9:45 a.m., morning worship service, fellowship meal, and service at 1:30 p.m. Albert McMullen, speaker; Bobbie Gibson, music; Chip Starnes, pastor.

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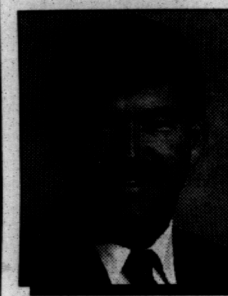
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## Staff Changes

**Belle Fountain Church, Jackson County,** has called **Mark Shelnutt** as pastor effective Feb. 16.



Shelnutt

A native of Miami, Fla., Shelnutt has a bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies. His previous place of service

was First Church, Benndale. Shelnutt is currently serving as superintendent at the Home of Grace for men.

**Marvin Graham** became pastor emeritus of White Bluff Church, Marion County, by official decision of the church on March 23. He resigned on Jan. 5 having served as pastor since 1985. Graham now resides in Taylorsville.

**Crestview Church, Lebanon Association,** has called **Bobby Shurden** as pastor effective March 30. He is a native of Drew. His previous place of service was Pineview Church, Hattiesburg. Shurden is a graduate of Mississippi Delta Junior College and Delta State University.

**David Langerfield**, minister of education/administration, at Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, will become the new associate pastor/staff coordinator. The church has begun seeking a new full-time minister of education.

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## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### God chooses to create

Genesis 1-2

By Greg McBride

With the story of creation we begin an eight-session survey of the Old Testament. This survey begins with God's self revelation in creation and finishes with creation's response to this revelation. Throughout the story of the Old Testament God purposes to reveal his ultimate authority over his creation order.

God reveals his power in creation (1:1-5). The opening phrase from Genesis 1 summarizes the writer's intent in the creation story ("In the beginning God..."). While many seek to place emphasis on the "how" of creation, the purpose behind the creation story of Genesis is to reveal the "who" of creation. In succinct, methodical language Moses recounts the activ-

ity of creation, placing emphasis on the actor as opposed to the action. For six days God said, God saw, and God named. Creation, then, is a testimony to the power of the creator.

Creation's response in each instance of God's spoken word is obedience. Unlike the creation myths of Israel's neighbors, which present the creation of the world as a cosmic struggle between the gods and various rival forces, Genesis portrays a creator, in perfect control, bringing order from chaos with his simple spoken word.

In times like ours, when the world seems out of order, we need be reminded of the marvelous truth of the first chapter of Genesis. The God who



McBride

brought order and purpose from chaos at the beginning of time, is able and willing to do the same in our lives today.

God affirms the goodness of his creation (1:31-2:1). After God spoke the world into existence, he then declared it good ("...and God saw that it was good").

The Gnostics of Paul's day declared the world evil and set out to separate themselves from any contact with it. Many today still succumb to this philosophy of the world being evil. However, with the creation story, the writer of Genesis pictures the Creator himself declaring the goodness of the world he created.

Following the creation of mankind in God's image, this declaration of approval changes ("and God saw all that He created, and behold, it was very good").

This change points to the importance of humanity in the

created order. Mankind is the apex of creation, to whom all was created and for whom all creation is entrusted. Man's inclusion in the garden brings God's creative activity to completeness. ("very good").

God provides for his creation (2:15-17). Chapter two of Genesis contains another account of the creation story. The second account complements the story in chapter one by emphasizing God's intimate involvement with his creation. In doing so this reveals God's provision for humanity.

Within the garden which he created God assigns Adam a meaningful task. Adam was to cultivate and keep the garden. Thus, useful work was part of God's original creation. God has assigned each of us a meaningful task with which to occupy our time. As Christians we should approach our work on earth as God's provision for accomplishing meaning and purpose in our lives.

God also provided for Adam

clearly defined boundaries in which to live ("but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat."). Within humanity is a God given need for boundaries. From our earliest childhood we seek out boundaries to help us order and manage our existence. These boundaries are not always limitations; rather, at times they are prohibitions which protect us from harm or things we cannot handle. We should understand the prohibition of the knowledge of good and evil in this latter way. In his divine wisdom God provides boundaries in which we all can organize our lives.

The biblical accounts of creation serve to assure us of God's power and presence in our lives. They help us see our world as a good gift given to us by God, and they help us understand our total dependence upon God for successful living in our world.

McBride is pastor, Kittiwake Church, Pass Christian.

## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### The one we serve

Revelation 1:4-15

By Paul Blanchard

In his writings to the churches, the Apostle John stresses the necessity of a complete commitment to the Lord Jesus. We are to serve the risen Christ faithfully. The book of Revelation begins with a blessing and a benediction. John has scarcely picked up his pen than a blessing is pouring from it to the written page. This book deals primarily with judgment, yet God begins it with grace. God begins this book by telling men that they have what they do not deserve — grace!

Our attention is drawn to the source of the blessing. It is a blessing with all of the

authority of heaven itself. It is a blessing given by the Father, Spirit, and the Son.

The Bible says that the blessing is "from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This can be none other than God the Father. He is presented to us as the one who transcends all time. He lives in the present, in the past, and in the future. God is a triune God. This blessing is also from God the Holy Spirit. In Revelation, he is seen as the executor of God's purposes. This blessing is also from God the Son, Jesus! Jesus witnessed to:

1. The name of God.
2. The nature of sin.



Blanchard

3. The need for righteousness.

4. The nearness of judgment.

5. The news of salvation.

When John saw Jesus in the midst of the golden lampstands, praise breaks forth. Jesus is worthy of praise. John proclaimed "Unto him that washed us from our sins in his own blood..." This is a melody of praise and worship unto the Son of God. John's praise and worship can help us understand the unique work of our Lord at Calvary for us. We should find strength and encouragement when we think of what price Jesus paid for us on the cross.

An African missionary, walking down a forest path where a day or two before fire had swept, leaving desolation in its train, found the charred

remains of a nest. In the nest was the carcass of a mother hen, burned to a cinder. Idly, he kicked the ashes with his foot and, to his astonishment, out from under the heap ran some baby chicks! Mother love had taught that hen to give her life for her brood. What can we say of Calvary's love? It is the love that many problems, disasters, or sin cannot quench. It is the love that will not let us go.

How does this passage relate to us in the everyday routine of life? It helps us to realize that we are to serve Jesus no matter what the circumstances in our life. John states in verse 9 that he is our brother in tribulation. Life will most certainly bring us difficulties. No one ever said life would be fair in its dealings with us. Even the apostles were no strangers to the hatred of this world.

John was a prisoner on a

small island called Patmos at the time of this writing. He had been banished there by Domitian. He was a prisoner because of his witness to the Word of God and for his testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we study Revelation, let us see the special blessings of God. In Revelation 1:3, our Lord states that the individual who reads this book is blessed. Revelation means "unveiling." It is the unveiling of the Lord Jesus Christ. As we look at the "lampstands" or churches, may we see characteristics of churches today.

So then, the book begins with visions of God, particularly God the Son. They show God in control of the course, the consummation, and the character of the age. They challenge us to witness, worship, and to wait.

Blanchard is Director of Missions, Winston Association.

## LIFE AND WORK

### Giver of new life

John 3:1-16

By Becky Briscoe Bennett

In this week's lesson we see a man who apparently had it all—money, position, and power. Yet he still sought truth. Jesus answered his questions and offered him a new life.

People Need New Life (3:1-4). In Jerusalem during the Passover celebration, Jesus saw the city filled with religious people. While busy with the Passover celebration, Jesus also interacted with many people who wanted to know him and follow him. Nicodemus acknowledged Jesus as a great teacher and greeted him with words of respect. The miracles of Jesus seemed to be proof to

Nicodemus that Jesus was sent from God.

Because Jesus knew the content of Nicodemus' heart, he answered a question Nicodemus had not asked. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees believed keeping the law to be essential to a relationship with God. Jesus gave Nicodemus a new truth. No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. What a radical change in thinking this was for Nicodemus!

Amazed by Jesus' response to his unasked questions, Nicodemus needed an explanation. Even religious people have difficulty understanding



Bennett

spiritual matters. All people need to be born from above. No one is exempt.

The Spirit Gives New Life (3:5-8). Nicodemus revealed he had failed to grasp the meaning of being born a second time. Jesus repeated the truth and added an explanation. A person is born once physically of human parents, but is born the second time spiritually of the Spirit.

Jesus showed great patience with Nicodemus. He is just as patient with us. Do we display patience to those who are unfamiliar with spiritual truths? Are we willing to repeat truths and examples? Jesus told Nicodemus to observe the wind. No one on earth directs the wind. It acts without human control. It cannot be seen. No one knows its source or its destination. Yet we certainly can observe its power.

The Spirit cannot be seen. We do not direct the Spirit. We can see the results of the Spirit's work. What a revelation for man brought up to believe a person could and should save himself by perfect obedience to the law of Moses and to a host of man-made regulations! New birth is done by the Spirit who cannot be seen, yet the results of the new birth are physical and can be seen. Can those around you see your new birth?

All People Are Offered New Life (3:9-16). New life is available to everyone. Long before we asked any questions God provided the answer. The Spirit does his work in the lives of all who ask for it. It must have been extremely hard for Nicodemus to unlearn what he had always believed.

Jesus speaks directly to those who are religious but without the new birth. Nicodemus had

the Old Testament, the teachings of John the Baptist, and the instruction and example of Jesus, but the truth still had not penetrated his heart. Jesus was specific as he answered Nicodemus one more time. All men must receive truth about heavenly things based upon the testimony of the one who has seen them. Jesus was the only one who could testify about heavenly things. Jesus gave Nicodemus the following information. Death is the punishment for sin. God provides the remedy. The remedy is lifted up in public view. Only those who look upon the remedy with a believing heart can be healed.

Jesus, God's gift to the world, is the perfect and only remedy for dying mankind. Only in Christ do we find spiritual fulfillment.

Bennett is Dean of Students at Blue Mountain College.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW

## The Baptist Children's Village



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director  
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### Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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### ANNOUNCING MORE CHURCHES

*Answering the Baptist Children's Village Challenge*

Golden Central Baptist Church in Tishomingo Association has pledged to support The Baptist Children's Village for 1 day in our centennial year.

\*\*\*If your church has also made this commitment, but has not yet let us know, please do so. We want to get your calendars to your church family.

### TOUR DATES

The Baptist Children's Village

will conduct tours of statewide campuses on the following dates:

**Farrow Manor Campus, Independence  
and  
Reedy Acres Campus,  
Water Valley**

**Thursday, April 24, 1997  
and  
Saturday, April 26, 1997**

#### Tentative Schedule

- 7:00 a.m. Meet at India Nunnery Campus for Continental Breakfast
- 8:00 a.m. Depart for Farrow Manor Campus
- 11:30 a.m. Tour and Lunch at Farrow Manor
- 1:30 p.m. Depart for Reedy Acres
- 2:45 p.m. Tour and Coffee at Reedy Acres
- 3:30 p.m. Depart for Return to India Nunnery Campus
- 6:00 p.m. Arrive India Nunnery Campus

For reservations call Chrystelle Thames at (601) 922-2242 or send:

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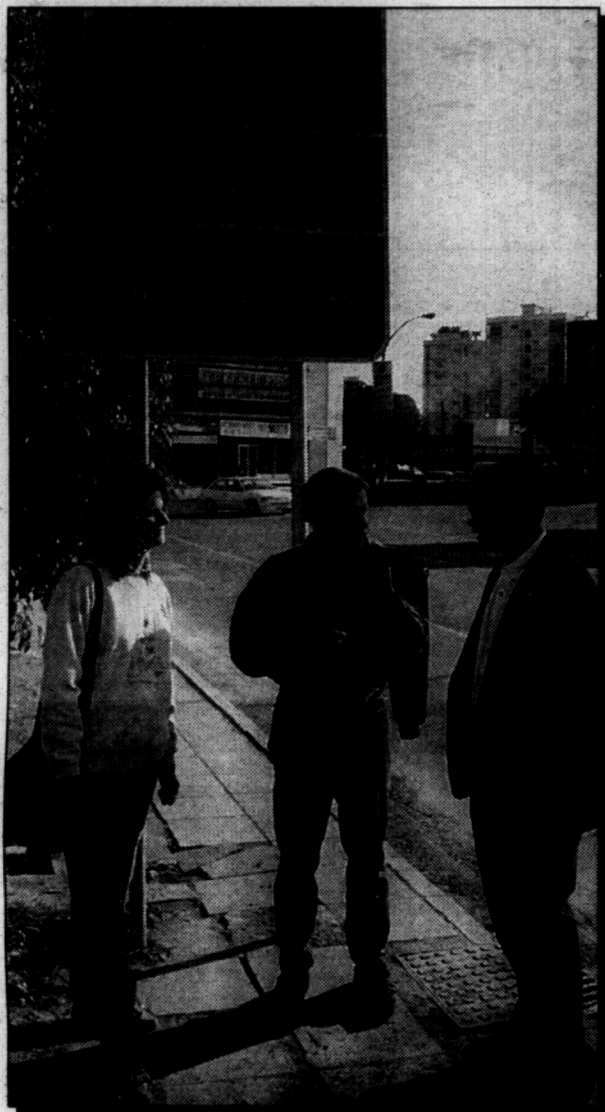
\*\*\*\*NOTE--If you would rather meet us at another campus for tours, let us know.



Rebecca Tanner, Child Care Worker; Lisa Davis, Child Care Worker; and Heather Arnold, Public Relations Assistant enjoy small group activities during a recent "Spiritual Renewal Week" held on The India Nunnery Campus for staff from our Dickerson Place Campus and India Nunnery Campus. Chaplain Chip Price hosted the activities for the week.



# Prayer walk opens way to accept gospel



**ON SITE WITH INSIGHT** — A prayer walk in a predominantly Muslim country led to unprecedented witnessing opportunities, according to Randy Sprinkle (center), FMB prayer coordinator. Sprinkle joined Southern Baptist representatives Susan Vann (left) and Gary DeBerry (right) on a prayer walk through Nicosia, Cyprus, in late February. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

**NICOSIA, Cyprus (BP)** — A prayer walk in a Middle Eastern country led to scores of Muslims hearing the gospel during late February.

Randy Sprinkle, prayer coordinator for the Foreign Mission Board (FMB), accompanied a Southern Baptist worker on a prayer walk through the capital of the country, which cannot be named because of security concerns.

After passing a Muslim street preacher several times, they decided to talk to him.

The worker shared the gospel with the Muslim preacher, and scores of people gathered around to hear his words.

Though the Muslim preacher had been talking loudly about Islam, he listened

attentively to the worker's words, said Sprinkle, who stood nearby praying intently.

The Southern Baptist worker was also invited to share the gospel in a drug rehabilitation center after they visited the facility's leaders.

"You understand I'll be sharing about Jesus just as I've shared with you?" the incredulous Southern Baptist worker asked.

"Yes," the facility director replied, "that's what we want to hear."

One patient at the facility was delivered of his drug addiction when he became a believer last fall. Since then the new believer has been trying to share the gospel with other addicts, but was unable to do so until the prayer walk provided an opening.

In a third encounter the two Southern Baptists met a well-dressed local sheik at a shop on a back street and again later at a restaurant. He invited the local Southern Baptist worker to visit a local Islamic mosque to tell the people about Jesus and let them ask questions.

Such responses are not common in such a heavily Muslim country, but Sprinkle said he is not surprised because of the increased prayer focus by evangelical churches on Muslim evangelism in recent years.

"For many years God has been moving his church with a burden for people locked into Islam," he said.

In another incident, a local believer accompanied Sprinkle and some Southern Baptist

workers to a point overlooking the capital city. As they stood there praying for its people to find Jesus Christ as savior, the local believer began asking himself out loud how he could get into all those thousands of homes to share the gospel.

"That's what can happen in a prayer walk," Sprinkle said.

Sprinkle met later with Southern Baptist personnel from across the Middle East and northern Africa gathered on Cyprus and led them on a prayer walk through downtown Nicosia.

"All intercession is spiritual warfare. It's standing in the gap for someone.

"Prayer is the act of confessing to God that we are unable to do anything about the situation and that only he can do it," Sprinkle told the workers before they hit the streets of Nicosia to walk and pray.

Some workers went to pray near the infamous "Green Line," a no-man's land which divides Nicosia between the Turkish-held northern part of the island and the Greek

Cypriot side.

Tensions have been high on the island in recent months after a series of border incidents.

"Prayer walking is not a sub-

stitute for sharing the gospel," Sprinkle cautioned, but "evangelism is picking up the spoils from a battle already won in prayer."



**STRATEGIC PRAYER** — Randy Sprinkle (right), prayer coordinator for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, led a seminar on eyes-open prayer walking for Southern Baptist workers serving across the Middle East and North Africa in late February. Attending the seminar were Southern Baptist representatives Susan Vann (left), based in Jordan, and Gary DeBerry (center), who serves in Cyprus. The prayer walking strategy calls for intercessors to walk through areas where a gospel breakthrough is needed, praying as God leads for area residents. (BP photo by Mike Creswell)

## Resettled Kurds safe from Saddam

**DALLAS (BP)** — Kurdish families rescued in December from the deadly grasp of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein are finally entering the United States — and feeling the warm embrace of Southern Baptists.

The first Kurdish family of December evacuees arrived in Dallas in late February. Dallas already is home to more than 2,000 Kurds. Several Kurdish families from suburban Midway Road Church greeted Abduljabbar Yousif Hasan, his wife, Zaheda, and their three small children, Niyan, Sundis, and Sedrah, at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

The Hasans left Iraq with the clothes they were wearing and the few possessions they could stuff into a single suitcase. When they arrived at their apartment near Midway Road Church, they found basic furnishings already provided by a Baptist layman.

"I believe in the great living God. He is the one who has provided these things," Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men and a member at Midway Road, told the family as he delivered additional furniture to their apartment.

In South Carolina, 13 Kurdish families — 52 people — will resettle in the Greenville area, thanks to the efforts of Southern Baptist layman Buddy Kellett and his wife, "Butch."

"When the Iraqi army pulled out of the northern zone, they filled all the wells full of rocks to keep the Kurdish people from having any water," recalls Kellett.

When the Kelletts were asked to help resettle

some of the Kurdish friends they made in Iraq, they got excited — and so did South Carolina Baptists.

"There's churches all over the state calling, sending donations and saying, 'What do you need? We want to be a part of it,'" said Kellett,



**NEW ARRIVAL** — Sad Korshid finds his luggage after arriving in Dallas. He is one of several Kurds resettled in the U.S. after helping a relief agency through which Southern Baptists aided Kurds in northern Iraq after the Persian Gulf War. Up to 175 men, women and children will be resettled by Southern Baptists over several months. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

who will personally hire several of the Kurdish men experienced in well drilling.

"It's just been overwhelming. I think that's what it's all about. You're either a mission-minded church or you're not a church; you're a building."

The Kelletts' home church, Fork Shoals in Greenville County, and several other area churches are sponsoring one or two Kurdish families each.

Refugee sponsorship includes helping families find shelter and jobs, learn English, and seek citizenship.

The U.S. government will provide up to six months' help with rent plus food stamps, Medicaid and funds for English classes.

## Bibliocipher

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POIKI XN POIKIRHKI  
ZHG ZH LHZCIJZZSPXHZ  
PH POIJ GOXLO SKI XZ  
LOKXNP UINTN, GOH  
GSBF ZHP SRPIK POI  
RBINO, DTP SRPIK POI  
NYXKXP.

KHJSZN IXMOP: HZI

Clue: Y equals P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Eight Thirty-Nine.